Agreement between India and Qatar for improving working conditions of Indian workers

185. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been entered into between India and Qatar envisaging improvement in the working conditions of Indian workers in Qatar;

(b) if so, what are the details of the agreement; and

(c) what are the names of the other countries with which Government of India are having discussions for similar agreements and what is the reaction of such countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (c) An agreement has been entered between Indian and Qatar envisaging improvement in the working conditions of Indian workers in Qatar. It provides for a model employment contract about service conditions and end of service benefits. It also provides for expeditious settlement of their disputes.

Similar efforts are being made to enter into labour agreements with other countries.

Closing down retail outlets by N.T.C.

186. SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA:
SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Textile Corporation (NTC) has recently colsed down some retail outlets on the ground of non-viability, if so, what are the names of such retail outlets; and

(b) whether NTC proposes to close down some more retails outlets in the near future; if so, the number and locations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) During the year 1985-86, the following two showrooms were closed by NTC:—

(1) Arni (Tamil Nadu)

(2) Madurai (East Veli), Tamil Nadu.

(b) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal to close down two showrooms in Tmilnadu and two showrooms in Andhra Pradesh. However, no final decision has been taken regarding closure of these showrooms;

Indian Labour Conference

187. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 28th Indian Labour Conference met in New Delhi on the 25th and 26th November, 1985;

(b) if so, what are the details of the participants in the Conference;

(c) what are the details of the conclusions arrived thereat;

(d) whether the conclusions were based on consensus; and

(e) if not, what were the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P .A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement I is attached (*See below*).

(c) to (e) In accordance with the decision of the 28th Session of the Indian Labour Conference at its concluding siting on the 26th November, 1985 that the draft consensus with regard to various issues deliberated by the Conference should be finalised after obtaining the comments from the participants, the consensus was finalised and circulated to all concerned. A copy of the consensus is attached as Statement II.

Statement I

Representatives from 18 Central Ministries and 28 States|Union Territories attended the 28th Session of the Indian Labour Conference held on 25-26th November, 1985, at New Delhi. As regards the Employers and Workers organisations, the number of delegates are indicated against each organisation as under:—

1.	Council of Indian Employers . . .	21
2.	All India Manufacturers Organisation . . .	3
3.	Indian National Trade Union Congress . .	9
4.	Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh .	5
5.	Hind Mazdoor Sabha .	3
6.	United Trade Union Centre (LS)	2
7.	National Labour Organisation . . .	1
8.	United Trade Union Congress . . .	1
9.	Trade Union Coordination Centre . . .	1
10.	All India Trade Union Congress . . .	1
11.	Centre of Indian Trade Unions . . .	1

Statement II

INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE

(28th Session-November, 25-26, 1985)

After detailed discussions, the following consensus emerged out of the deliberations:

1. The Conference decided that the Standing Labour Committee should be revived and it should meet once in six months. The Committee should be compact and its composition should be left to be decided by the Union Labour Minister.

2. The Conference welcome the suggestion of the Union Finance Minister that a small Group should be set up by the Ministry of Labour to assist the Government in seeing that the internal resources from the public sector undertaking to the tune of Rs. 35,000 crores in the 7th Five Year Plan could be mobilised. The Conference felt that a tripartite group should be set up in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

3. The Conference noted the general improvement in the industrial relations situation. It felt that as far as possible, disputes should be resolved through bipartite mechanism. Where this was not possible, tripartite mechanism could be resorted to or the dispute referred to voluntary arbitration. The voluntary arbitration should be preferred to adjudication.

4. The Conference was concerned about the long delays in the settlement of workers disputes by the labour courts. The Conference also urged on the Government to finalise its views on the recommendations of the Sanat Mehta Committee regarding setting up of Industrial Relations Commission.

5. The growing sickness of industrial units was viewed with concern and it was felt that immediate preventive steps should be taken to go into the cause of sickness and effective remedial action initiated to combat it. Emphasis should be laid on quick programmes for rehabilitation and revival of sick units. A Standing Committee should be set up to monitor the problem of sickness in industries and also to undertake indepth study of individual case of colsed sick units as well as units identified as potentially sick. The Conference generally welcome the Sick-Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Bill, 1985 already introduced in the Parliament. It, however, suggested that Government may consider amending it to bring wiihin its purview sick industrial units as also the potentially sick units to prevent the latter from closing down. The Conference also felt that the interests of labour should be fully represented on the Board and the State Governments should also find representation thereon.

6. The Conference agreed in principle to the implementation of the scheme of workers participation in management in the public, private and cooperative sectors, at various levels including Board level . The question whether this scheme should be voluntary or should be implemented by legislation as also the modalities for its implementation were left to be considered by the Standing Labour Committee. The Committee could also take into account the framework and the outline of the scheme which has been proposed in the agenda papers.

7. The Conference felt that the existing measures for the safety and health of the workers should be strengthened, effectively implemented and monitored. It was also felt that these measures cannot be implemented without active cooperation both from the employers and the workers and adequate training in safety equipment should be provided to the workers.

The Conference noted that the Ministry of Labour was also considering proposals for amendment to the Factories Act and desired that the proposed amendments should be expedited. It was also felt that punishment for repeated violations of provisions of Factories Act dealing with safety and health aspects should be made more deterrent.

8. There was consensus in favour of the Gratuity Insurance Scheme as proposed by the Ministry of Labour. It should, however, be ensured that the workers should not be adversely affected in the payment of gratuity in the event of non-payment of insurance premia by the management.

9. The Conference discussed the need for a national minimum wage. Till such time as this is feasible, it would be desirable to have regional minimum wage in regard to which the Central government may lay down the guidelines. The minimum wages should be revised at regular periodicity and should be linked with the rise in cost of living.

10. The Conference supported the proposal for a comprehensive legislation on child labour. It was, however, of the view that the problem arises out of socio-economic compulsions and cannot be tackled merely by legislation. It felt that one of the ways for effectively dealing with the problem is to improve the economic conditions of the families which by force of circumstances have to send their children to work. In view of the concern expressed in the Conference, it was felt that Industrial Tripartite Committee should be set up at the Central and State levels in respect of those industries where the incidence of child labour is high. These committees should not only lay down the policies but also monitor the implementation of the schemes|programmes taken up in this regard.

11. The Conference felt that urgent steps are required to improve the working conditions in the unorganised sector and to extend to the workers in this sector, the benefits of Welfare Funds. For this purpose, if necessary, more Welfare Funds should be set up . In order that workers are able to avail adequately the benefits from the Welfare Funds, the income limit on eligibility for assistance from the Funds should be enhanced.

12. The Conference was of the view that exemption from the coverage of the ECIC Scheme should be permitted in those cases where adequate alternative arrangements exist and a demand to that effect was made both by the employers and the employees. However, taking into account the likely financial, organisational and other implications involved, the Conference felt that this matter may be remitted for consideration of the Standing Committee of the Corporation.

13. As regards the Employees Provident Fund, it was generally felt that the contribution should be raised from 8 per cent to 10 per cent. However, majority of the employers group had reservations in the matter.

14 . The Conference felt that the matter relating to criteria for workers representation on the Indian Labour Conference should be left to be discussed and decided by the central trade union organisations and in the case of any differences among them, the Government may take a decision in the matter.